



Fleet Street,
30th September, 1927.

A NEW SYNAGOGUE.

On the 25th inst., Sir Robert Waley Cohen opened the new Borough Synagogue in Walworth, which had been consecrated by the Chief Rabbi, who, in the course of an inspiring address, said that during the month five new Houses of Worship had been opened under the auspices of the United Synagogue. Such an event had a significance unconfined to the members of those new synagogues; it was an occasion for gladness to the whole House of Israel. "What better evidence can there be of the continued vitality of Traditional Judaism, that it is helping its children to resist the constant wearing down of high ideals and lofty purposes, and counteract the forces of secularism and worldliness in our generation?" said Dr. Hertz.

"The origin of the synagogue is shrouded in obscurity. We find no traces of its existence before the Babylonian Exile. Soon after the days of Ezra, however, we find that, wherever Jews dwelt, pious men met Sabbath by Sabbath, and Festival by Festival, for religious devotion and Scripture-reading and exposition. Thus a new type of worship began in the history of humanity, the type of congregational worship without priest or ritual." In all their long history," says a non-Jewish writer, "the Jewish people have done scarcely anything more wonderful than to create the synagogue. No human institution has a longer continuous history, and none has done more for the uplifting of the human race.

"The synagogue was even more than a House of Prayer and Instruction. In Middle Ages, women were allowed when travelling to light their Sabbath candles in the synagogue. And in Eastern countries, the synagogue, or the portion adjoining it, was for centuries the communal inn. When poor strangers came to town they were there accommodated over Sabbath; and the Kiddush over the wine is thus, in its origin, part of the Sabbath meal which was spread for passing strangers. The synagogue was, furthermore, the library and reading room of the community, institutions which Israel possessed thousands of years before modern culture made them fashionable.

"But these things belong to a far-off and vanished world. Gone is the olden picturesqueness and the all-embracing humanity of the ancient and mediaeval synagogue. In England, France and Germany, a Shool is rarely more than a place of prayer, and sometimes of preaching and elementary instruction. Only in large Jewish centres do we still find synagogues with a sphere of influence at all comparable to that in the ancient days. It is my hope and trust that this brief survey of the place of the synagogue in the life of our fathers

cause you to resolve that this synagogue be more than a house of occasional, or semi-occasional prayer to you and your children; that in all matters of the spirit, the synagogue once more become the divine instrument which is to endow the souls of your children with the religious ideals, values, teachings, and convictions of Israel."

CHRISTIANS DESIRE JUDAISM.

According to the Secretary of the Warsaw Rabbinate, Mr. Gesundheit, with regard to the question of the admission of proselytes to Judaism, which has arisen in connection with the issue of the circular prohibiting such admissions, during 1918 a number of Christians applied to the Rabbinate asking for admission to Judaism. The first to apply was a Polish officer of the German Army. It was decided not to accept him as a proselyte. Since then there were continually applications from intending proselytes, but the Rabbinate admitted to Judaism only such who were descended from Jews. In the year 1923, after the adoption of the Constitution, there was a case of a Christian who applied to the Rabbinate for admission to Judaism, and as he was generally known and had warm recommendations from a number of prominent people, it was finally decided that he should be admitted and that in future proselytes who were properly qualified should be accepted. From that time till January 1st, 1927, twenty-one Christians have been admitted to Judaism. This is only a very small proportion of the number of Christians who applied to the Rabbinate for admission. The Rabbinate in all cases imposed the greatest of difficulties in respect to the admission of proselytes. Since the Rabbinate has received from the Government Commissariat of Warsaw the order prohibiting the acceptance of proselytes, no further proselytes have been accepted. Many of the Christians who have applied for admission as proselytes have not, however, given up hope of being admitted and come almost daily to the Rabbinate to enquire whether it is now possible to admit them.

PROHIBITION OF SHECHITA.

The question was discussed in the Thuringian Diet on the 23rd inst., states the J.T.A. correspondent in Berlin. Deputy von Bassewitz, who reported on behalf of the Commission appointed to consider the question, said that the Jena Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals held that the killing of animals without their first being stunned was cruelty and should in its opinion not be tolerated any longer. Article 135 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic, however, guaranteed to all citizens the unrestricted exercise of their religion, and since the

question of Shechita was to be raised also in other German States, he proposed that no definite attitude should be adopted on the question for the present, but that the Diet should confine itself to transmitting the memorandum of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals to the Government for its attention.

In the course of the debate which followed, the only Nationalist Socialist present in the House, Deputy Marschler, moved a resolution that Shechita should be prohibited forthwith. Deputy Dr. Kiess moved an amendment that the House pass to next business. Both the resolution and the amendment were defeated. The proposal of the Commission to transmit the memorandum to the Government for attention was approved.

TO FIGHT MOVEMENT OF PROHIBITION.

Meanwhile I hear that the Central Union of German Citizens of the Jewish Faith has started a campaign to fight against the movement which is being carried on in Germany to bring about the prohibition of Shechita. In connection with this movement Chief Rabbi Dr. Carlebach and Herr Artur Schweriner, Syndicus of the Central Union, addressed a big public meeting attended by nearly a thousand people at the High School in Hamburg. Dr. Carlebach said that the Jewish religion forbade all forms of cruelty to animals. Judaism prohibited the hunting of animals for sport. Judaism provided a day of rest for animals as well as for human beings. This spirit also dominates the Jewish laws of slaughtering animals for food. Shechita was the most humane form of killing. All experts agreed that the incision resulted in the animal immediately losing consciousness and that what some imagined to be movements by the animal after the incision were really only reflexes. The movement to prohibit Shechita, Dr. Carlebach said, was inspired not so much by love of the animals as by the desire to curtail the liberties of the Jewish population. It was that against which they had to fight. Herr Schweriner said that there was a grave danger of Shechita being prohibited in Bavaria, unless something happened to prevent it at the last moment. As if directed by an unseen power, the Nationalists were moving resolutions for the prohibition of Shechita not only in all the Parliaments of the German States, but in all the Parliaments of Europe. The Municipal Councils of the larger cities were being turned into battling-grounds for anti-Semitic agitation by the expedient of introducing resolutions to prohibit Shechita. It was undeniably a new manifestation of anti-Semitism and must be fought as such.

THE MOVEMENT IN POLAND.

A serious movement for the prohibition of Shechita has been started in Poland. It began with a memorandum submitted by the Polish Butchers' Organisations to the Ministry of Agriculture urging that Shechita should be prohibited for two reasons, firstly on the

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